



Summer Meal Policy Resources

As a State agency, it is important to be aware of how the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) works within the larger Federal framework. This section provides information on the background of SFSP and resources describing Federal policy related to SFSP.

History of SFSP

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act initially provided funding for the SFSP in 1968. It became a separate program in 1975. More than 2.28 million children participated at almost 39,000 sites in the summer of 2012.

Who Administers the SFSP?

The SFSP is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In most States, the State education agencies administer SFSP. In some areas, the State health or social service department may be designated. Locally, SFSP is operated by approved sponsors, including school districts, local government agencies, camps, or private nonprofit organizations.

How does SFSP Work?

Sponsors sign agreements with their State agencies to operate the program. SFSP reimburses approved sponsors for serving meals that meet Federal nutritional guidelines. Sponsors receive payments from USDA, through their State agencies, based on the number of meals they serve. Generally, sponsors provide free meals to children at eligible sites in low-income areas, such as schools, parks, or community centers.

Where does SFSP Operate?

States approve SFSP meal sites as open, enrolled, or camp sites. Open sites operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children come from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal poverty level, making them eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Meals are served free to any child attending an open site. Enrolled sites provide free meals to children enrolled in an activity program at the site where at least half of them are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Camps may also participate in SFSP. They receive payments only for the meals served to children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.



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Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA)

- Grants legislative authority to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to operate the SFSP.



**U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)**

- Develops program regulations that are published in the Code of Federal Regulations.
- Interprets program regulations and instructs States regarding how to operate the SFSP.
- Provides program guidance through handbooks and memoranda.



FNS Regional Offices

- Provides technical assistance to State agencies



State Agency

- Provides support to sponsors and the public by answering questions, providing SFSP funding, doing outreach to disadvantaged areas, and providing training.
- Approves sponsors and provides reimbursement for eligible SFSP meals.
- Approves eligible sites to operate SFSP.



Sponsors

For more information on these agencies, scroll down to USDA Resources.



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USDA Resources

FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>

The FNS website has a subscription feature for any new guidance that is issued related to the SFSP: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFNS/subscriber/new>

Program Handbooks

The legislative, regulatory, and policy requirements of the SFSP are consolidated in easy to understand guidance for sponsors, monitors and site supervisors. These handbooks are updated annually to ensure that all information is accurate. Updates are highlighted inside.

- Administrative Guidance for Sponsors
- Monitor's Guide
- Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors
- Site Supervisor's Guide
- Site Supervisor's Guide (Spanish)

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/library/handbooks.html>

Definitions:

Code of Federal Regulations, 7 C.F.R. 225

Legislative authority granted to the Department of Agriculture and other Program requirements are codified here to instruct State agencies how to administer the SFSP.

<http://www.ecfr.gov>

Policy Memorandum

Program guidance clarifies and interprets both legislative and regulatory requirements of the SFSP. Operational waivers and urgent changes to Program operations can be announced through memoranda, but is ultimately codified in the Code of Federal Regulations.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/Administration/policy.html>

Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act

Passed and reauthorized by Congress, this grants legislative authority to the Department of Agriculture to operate the SFSP.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/NSLA.pdf>



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Utilize these resources to ensure your summer meal operations are successful. For additional questions, sponsors and the general public should contact their State agency for help. State agencies should contact their FNS Regional Office.

List of FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

List of State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>



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